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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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URGENT ACTION

February 6, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL SCOWCROFT

FROM: CLINTON E. GRANGER
WILLIAM STEARMAN

Dismissed with Defense. BS

SUBJECT: Situation in Cambodia

We believe the situation in Cambodia has taken an ominous turn for the worse during the past week. The new dimension that has been added to the equation is the very effective use of mines on the Mekong by the enemy. As a result, convoy operations have come to a halt. Yesterday, two tugs were sunk and one was beached. We are confronted now with a situation wherein convoy crews are refusing to sail up the Mekong, a number of insurance companies have raised their premiums to astronomical levels and Lloyds of London has refused to offer anymore insurance coverage. In addition, the number of sinkings is beginning to limit the number of bottoms and shield barges available for convoy duty. As of yesterday all money in the Cambodian MAP has been committed. The FANK is down to an eleven day supply of ammunition.

Bird and Sun have now surged to ten C-130 sorties per day. The company is trying to hire additional crews so that a level of twenty sorties per day can be achieved in two weeks. Twenty sorties per day will provide a total of 240 short tons going into Phnom Penh each day. The present rate of ammunition expenditure is about 600 short tons per day and total requirements for all consumables is 15,000 short tons per day. If the present situation continues severe rationing will have to be implemented in Phnom Penh.

Some factual data is needed rapidly so that decisions can be made if necessary. For example:

-- We really do not have a good feel here in Washington for the type of mine threat now posed by the enemy. What kind are they? Are there people available in Defense who could be sent out in a hurry to Phnom Penh to get a handle on this problem?

-- Are there any South Vietnamese or US Navy mine clearing assets that could be made available to the Cambodians?

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-- Should we consider pulling some of the present MEDTC personel out and substituting people knowledgeable in mining operations and general combat operations?

-- Should we consider indemnifying civilian ships that are willing to run the gauntlet that otherwise would not be able to obtain insurance?

-- How much of a surge capability can Pochentong Airport handle? Could it even handle 20 sorties per day at a sustained rate?

In light of the rapidly deteriorating situation in Cambodia, we believe these questions should be addressed by the Departments of Defense and State on an urgent basis.

RECOMMENDATION

That you task Defense through General Wickham to analyze the situation and provide the data relating to the above questions as soon as possible.

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